

REVELATION

Not What You Fear

Better Than You Imagine



HEAR AND OVERCOME

Big Idea: In Revelation 2 and 3, Jesus dictates letters to each of the seven historical churches in Asia Minor which are going through very real crises. However, the naming of seven churches is symbolic for all churches universal, so these letters are also intended for us. Which church best describes your spiritual life today?

Circumstances & Rebuke

Mostly Have It Together

- **Smyrna** - the church experiencing escalating persecution (2:8-11)
- **Philadelphia** – the insignificant church that could be overwhelmed by its smallness (3:7-13)

Cutting Up

- **Pergamum** – the church that embraces worshiping other gods (2:12-17)
- **Thyatira** - the church that will compromise their ethics to maintain their standard of living (2:18-25)
- **Sardis** – the church that is dying on the inside despite their outward appearance (3:1-6)

Going Off The Deep End

- **Ephesus** – the church with good theology, but a loss of mission (2:1-7)
- **Laodicea** – the church that decides it doesn't need Jesus (3:14-22)

Rewards – all of the rewards point us to the joy of being with God throughout eternity

Corrective –

- **Remember** how you lived for Jesus in the beginning
- **Remain** faithful in the face of mounting opposition
- **Repent** of your worship of other gods
- **Resist** the seduction to erode your morals for worldly treasures
- **Revive** your spiritual passion for witness in a dead world
- **Refocus** on what God can do through your obedient witness
- **Refine** your morality and commitment to Jesus

Questions For Conversation:

1. In each of these letters, Jesus expresses concern for the spiritual condition of seven churches. He offers a diagnosis of each’s condition, and offers a course of treatment for their condition. If you were to diagnose the condition of the church in America today, what would your diagnosis entail? What course of treatment would you prescribe?
2. As you review the CIRCUMSTANCES & REBUKE for each church, which churches have you been able to relate to at some point in the past? Offer some specific details about your experience at that time.
3. Which diagnosis do you think that Jesus would most likely give to your spiritual condition today? Why? How are you seeing the effects of that spiritual condition manifested?
4. Consider the condition of Ephesus specifically. In Ephesus they knew about God, but had discontinued really knowing and serving Him. Can settling into a “know about, but not know” stance with God become a bigger challenge for a believer over time? Why or why not?
5. As we consider the context of these seven churches a consistent theme develops: As churches resist the allure of seduction they are more inclined to experience opposition and persecution. What does the level of opposition you experience suggest about your Christian life? Conversely, the more Christians mirror the world, the greater the criticism they receive from Christ.
6. Which corrective step(s) do you need to initiate to remedy or revitalize your Christian walk?

Points of Application:

- The level of opposition/persecution we confront may be proportional to the dynamics of the witness we present.
- God does not take lightly his people engaging in idolatry and immorality.
- If my spiritual life is suffering from what I am currently engaged in, I need to change my behavior to revive my spiritual life.
- Knowing about God does not equate with knowing and serving him.
- No matter how far you have wandered from God, you are never too far to invite him back in.

Prepare for Next Week Reading:

Day	Revelation Reading	OT Reading
Monday	Revelation 4:1-5	Ezekiel 1; Daniel 7
Tuesday	Revelation 4:6-8	Isaiah 6
Wednesday	Revelation 4:9-11	Psalms 19
Thursday	Revelation 5:1-5	Genesis 49:8-12; Isaiah 11:1-10
Friday	Revelation 5:6-10	Isaiah 53
Saturday	Revelation 5:11-14	Psalms 33:2; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; Isaiah 42:9-10